

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-10, 12-15 and 17-25 are pending in the present application, claims 2, 11 and 16 being canceled herein, and claims 20-25 being new.

Allowable Claims 2-4, 11 and 16

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 2-4, 11 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1 and 7-9 over Mattisson in view of Ninh

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 6,577,212 to Mattisson et al. ("Mattisson") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,212,274 to Ninh ("Ninh"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1 and 7-9 are amended herein to include the subject matter of allowable claim 2, which is subsequently canceled herein. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 7-9 are patentable for all the reasons that claim 2 is patentable.

For at least all the above reasons, claims 1 and 7-9 are patentable over the prior art of record. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 10 and 15 over Remson in view of Ninh

Claims 10 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 5,144,287 to Remson ("Remson") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,212,274 to Ninh ("Ninh"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 10 and 15 are amended herein to include the subject matter of allowable claim 11, which is subsequently canceled herein. It is respectfully submitted that claims 10 and 15 are patentable for all the reasons that claim 11 is patentable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 5 and 6 over Mattisson in view of Ninh and Goldfarb

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Mattisson in view of Ninh, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,335,656 to Goldfarb ("Goldfarb"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 5 and 6 are amended herein to include the subject matter of allowable claim 2. It is respectfully submitted that claims 5 and 6 are patentable for all the reasons that claim 2 is patentable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 12-14 and 17-19 over Remson in view of Ninh and Schulz

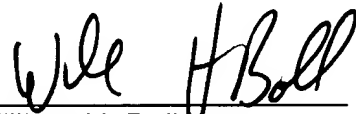
In the Office Action, claims 12-14 and 17-19 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Remson in view of Ninh, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,880,538 to Schulz ("Schulz"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 12-14 and 17-19 are amended herein to include the subject matter of allowable claims 11 and 16, respectively. It is respectfully submitted that claims 12-14 and 17-19 are patentable for all the reasons that claims 11 and 16 are patentable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will H Bollman", written over a horizontal line.

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